

FRANCHISE GRABBERS TO TRY SAME OLD STUNT UNDER NEW GUISE

The Fisher-Captain crowd is going to try to slip over another "permissive bill" on the city council at its next meeting.

As a last hope to save the traction gang ship, which was badly scuttled by the city council when the "30-20" bill was rejected just before the aldermanic elections, they decided to throw overboard the "extra 20-year period" ballast and make it a straight 30-year franchise grab.

In this form the bill is conceded a good chance of going to the legislature with the recommendation of a majority of the council.

But it will be opposed by several factions. There are those who figure this latest child of Walter Fisher's fertile brain is the opening wedge to the biggest steal traction interests have ever attempted in Chicago.

While the bill itself is innocent enough and simply offers the city the right to give any kind of a franchise it pleases, including a 30-year grant which it cannot make now, it is thought to be the first step toward sandbagging the city by the methods suggested by our \$250,000 gold brick traction and subway commission.

Because of this feature, some aldermen and citizens want the terms of the proposed grant outlined before they will get behind any kind of a permissive bill in the legislature.

Spokesman for these citizens yesterday before the local transportation committee was Ald. John Kennedy. He protested against putting the council on record in favor of any permissive bill until the aldermen knew what it was intended to permit.

He asked the Fisher clique to come out into the open and show the people just what they want before they ask the council to pass favorably on any phase of their program.

Then, on being questioned by Walter Fisher, Kennedy said that in his opinion, the scheme could be financed without allowing the street car companies to spend a cold hundred million dollars and add this to their capital account to be paid by the city before the municipal ownership could be accomplished.

Although Kennedy's explanation of his program was brief and incomplete because of lack of time in preparation, it plainly created a small panic in the forces behind the Fisher-Busby-Captain program. With more study of the subway report, Kennedy is liable to prove a stumbling block in the path of the traction crowd.

He closed by telling the local transportation committee that if Fisher's traction plans were uncovered before the council was asked to "O. K." the permissive bill, the bill might go to the legislature with the unanimous support of the aldermen. He intimated that, unless this is done, there will be a fight on the bill before the legislature, even if it does slip by the council under its disguise of innocence.

Tomaz Duether, sec'y of the Greater Chicago Federation of anti-loop Northwest Side merchants, asked for time to have the attorney for the federation, Former Ass't Corp. Counsel James Skinner, point out where the permissive bill promises things to the city that it can never give. This was granted.

From the attitude of the transportation committee it is plain that Walter Fisher, with his Daily News and Tribune backing, can still get anything he wants for the traction barons.

The Hearst-Dunne-Harrison mob are lining up their plans to pull the same old weather-beaten "municipal ownership" campaign that has succeeded so well in the past. It was the Hearst brand of municipal ownership